1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

for the sleeping places of grandparents or parents-in-law, which are avoided out of respect, these sleeping places serve as seats in the daytime. In the centre of the dividing wall is the cooking place; this is a built-up square of pounded earth and clay, perhaps five feet in each direction and raised about a foot off the ground; into this while it is still soft are inserted four upright stones to support the cooking pots over the logs of wood. Above the fire-place is a drying ledge of woven bamboo hanging from the rafters. There is a very fragile ceiling of bamboo which serves as a store-house; it is entered through a trap-door which is placed nearly directly above the cooking-place so as to allow the smoke to escape and which is reached by a notched log.

The dividing wall which separates the two rooms is usually a wooden partition (occasionally bamboo) with a door, or at least a door-frame, in the side nearest the balcony. This second room is called *dé-ong*. In the houses of lamas and of the more pious laymen there is an altar against the south wall. This altar varies enormously with the wealth and inclinations of the individual; some of the most elaborate are miniature reproductions of the altars in the monastery, with large metal images and musical instruments and other decorations; and in one or two houses there are pigeon-holes on either side containing the sixteen volumes of the Boom, the shortened version of the Kangyour. In other houses the altar is no more than a wooden box set up on end, with one small metal image inside, and sometimes not even that.

The *dé-ong*, whether it is fitted up as a private lamaist temple or not, is always more or less of a ceremonial room, for in it are performed the numerous ceremonies which occur in the life of everyone, for feared or actual illness or death, or for marriage. Ordinarily the room is little used and is only slept in by lamas, and not always by them. The attitude to the *dé-ong* is similar to that held towards the parlour in lower-middle-class English homes. It is the place where distinguished visitors are received, where emotionally important events of a slightly ceremonious nature take place; it is not a room which is used by the family in ordinary everyday life. In one or two houses there is a small and narrow store-room beyond the *dé-ong*; in other houses the *dé-ong* is used for this purpose also. Heads of maize and millet are suspended from the bamboo ceiling to dry, and sacks of grain and flour are kept under the altar. People fetching stores from this place are meant to prostrate themselves three times at each visit, but usually

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

these should never be placed to the east of the house or the occupants will die: whenever possible they should be placed to the north. Inside the house, water must be stored on the north side; the fire-place should be on the west; and the grinding-mill should always stand on the north. I should add, however, that I hardly ever saw this arrangement carried out in any of the houses I entered, and the old Hlaribu said that it did not really matter.

Assuming that a site has been selected which does not too greatly contravene the above instructions, the Lama will visit it and make offerings to any spirits who might be disturbed by reason of the turning of the earth, or by the cutting down of trees with which to build the house. At the same time the original handful of earth, which the builder first took to the Lama, must be returned to the exact spot from which it was taken. After this the four corner-posts are set up, and the house may be completed without further disturbance. All houses, even temporary field-huts, must be built with at least two posts; and in no circumstances should a house ever be built in exact alignment with another.

As soon as the house is completed Lamas will come and perform the *Li Tashi* ceremony, which consists in offering rice and flowers; but this I never saw. In addition to the *Li Tashi* performed when the house is finished, this ceremony should be carried out, if possible, annually for the first three years. It is entirely optional whether it is done or not when a new floor is put down; but many people have the ceremony performed once every year as a matter of course. This, however, depends upon their means, since the necessary Lamas have to be paid and fed. Apart from the reading of holy books by four or five Lamas, the principal part of the ceremony consists of smearing the house pillars with a mixture of ox-blood, spirit, and butter by the Mandal. For this purpose an ox is sacrificed the day before, and its flesh offered to the gods and devils of the land on which the house stands, and to any spirits that might be dwelling in the planks

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

it is usual to call in some experienced old man to fasten such things up. None of the things had been removed from the house while the roof was being repaired. It is said that a new roof lasts for about seven years, after which it must be completely renewed. No nails are used in the construction of houses, all woodwork being mortised and tied where necessary with canes. Even large buildings like the monastery are constructed entirely without nails.

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There is no furniture in Lepcha houses; beds, tables (except the low Tibetan variety), and chairs being unknown. The kitchen stove is merely a platform of earth, on which some half-dozen large stones are placed as supports for the cooking pots. These are generally of copper or brass, and I never once saw any kind of earthenware vessel and was told they were never used. Stores of maize and millet hang from the rafters, and other grains are kept in baskets stacked against the walls. The family bedding may generally be seen draped across these baskets during the day-time; and unwanted clothing is suspended from bamboo slivers inserted in cracks in the walls. I occasionally noticed that the walls had been papered with old newspapers. One such was plastered with years-old copies of the *Evening News*, one of which advertised the film of "Bengal Lancer"; but how these ever reached Lingtem is beyond my comprehension. Our own cast-off papers were always in much demand, one man in particular asking constantly for pictures of wars. He seemed to think that war was a fine experience, and talked of little else, although of course he had never seen one. Anyhow, the walls of his cottage are no longer bare: and for the rest of his life he can sit in peace while gazing at pictures of Franco's atrocities. I hope sincerely that this is the nearest to war he will get.

Water is brought in long hollow bamboos and stored in copper pots, of the type that form part of the marriage gifts. These do not hold more than a couple of gallons, and are

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

865 flower," or show it some other thing to attract its attention.
[861] When it is old enough to understand what is said it may sometimes be necessary to frighten it: *Kunjyong di-nong* is a phrase commonly used for this purpose, and may be roughly translated as, "Look out! the bogey man is after you!"; but apart from this, it is very generally believed that it is wrong to frighten young children.

[854] The baby starts to crawl when it is about six months old,
854 but it is not stood up until it is about a year, three or four months after which it commences to walk. Inside the house the baby is usually left to crawl about at its own free will: otherwise it is carried on someone's back, with its legs straddled round the waist, until it is about two-and-a-half years old, or even later if it is a youngest child. When the mother is working in the fields the baby remains in position on her back, where it soon learns to sleep peacefully while being constantly bumped about. Inside the house one of
[857] the other children will usually keep an eye on it; otherwise the parents will take turns in doing this. Baskets and cradles are seldom used: when it is necessary to put the baby down it is merely placed on a cloth on the floor or ground; but it is never swaddled. I should say that the average Lepcha child is much more carefully looked after than the corresponding Nepali child. It is very unusual to see a Gurkha without scars on the head, the result of falling into the fire as a baby; but I never saw a single case of this amongst the Lepchas. It may possibly be due to the fact that in Lepcha
[354 houses the hearth is raised about a foot above the level of
171] the floor, where it is thus out of reach of very small children, whereas the Nepali hearth is generally on the same level as the ground.

856 A baby can always toddle about before it starts to talk; and from the sounds it makes, when it is about four or five months old, it is easy to judge whether it will start to speak at the normal time. The speech of an average child, however, will not be intelligible until it is three. Up to this
[198] time it is spoken to in a special baby language, of which

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

231 These stalls for the cattle consist of a protecting roof
343 supported on a bamboo frame. On the sloping side there is a little platform about ½ a meter high, which is used as a rack and is enclosed with bamboo posts. Here the fodder is piled,—grass and the branches and leaves of certain trees and shrubs. Little huts are used as stalls for the goats. These are raised about one meter high on bamboo posts. A bamboo gangway over which the goats cross into the hut, leads to the door. For the poultry, there is a little hut raised on bamboo posts about two meters above the ground. The poultry get into the hut by walking over a post with notches cut into it. In this manner the goats and poultry are protected against the wild animals. Every farm has a few dogs of a wretched paria breed. Horses and donkeys are rare.

342 The house of the Rong tribesman differs from that of the Nepalese, Bhutanese and Tibetans. It is so built on the slope, that the back wall rests against a stone foundation. A little path runs between the rear wall and the mountain slope, and this leads to the door either directly or through a little stone stairway. In front of the wall in the direction of the slope, a terrace is levelled out and on this there are two or three rows of columns made of square-cut tree trunks which support a balcony of planks. Over this balcony are walls made of pannels which are either filled in with wooden boards or with bamboo slats which are smeared with a layer of mud. A few openings are left in the walls which serve as windows and these are closed with the aid of sliding boards. The construction of the roof is peculiar. It consists of three sections; one of these is the middle ridge roof and two gable roofs. While the ground plan of the house is square, the roof is oval. It is covered with a special variety of grass held in place with bamboo slats. On the outer side a gallery runs either all around the four walls or around one wall only. (Fig. 29-32).

353 The inside of the square house is divided into several
● 354 parts. The biggest room is the fireplace. The planks of the floor along the back wall are covered with a thick layer of clay and are set in an edging of clay. In the centre there are three stones on which the kettles are placed. In larger families there are two fire-

11:Hermanns M-5 (1951)1954
AK5 Lepcha AK5

places made of five stones. The third stone in the middle is common to both and is long enough to support a kettle on each of its outer extremities. Since the stones are placed with a view to holding larger kettles little iron tripods with rings are placed between the stones so as to permit the use of little kettles. Wood is used for fuel. About 1 and ½ meter above the fire a bamboo framework shelf is suspended for holding the kitchen utensils, fuel and other articles. The fireplace stretches across the entire width of the house, as it is the chief work-room, dining-room and, at night, the dormitory. In addition to this there are other little rooms shut off by wooden partitions. Some of these have a roof made of bamboo slats. All types of belongings are stored up over this ceiling which can be approached by the help of a tree trunk notched at intervals to serve as stairs. Occasionally one finds an additional partition which serves as an altar on which sacrifices are offered. This is, very likely, a borrowing from Buddhism.

The pig sties are sometimes located under the house, sometimes at the side. Near the house are situated the stables for cattle and goats and the poultry cages, together with other store houses. The entire settlement in some cases is completely enclosed with a bamboo fence.

Individual farmhouses are as a rule all by themselves. But there are also settlements which comprise of two, three or four houses. This kind of dwelling, a kind of building on piles, is characteristic of the Rong, but has its parallels in South-East Asia and South China.

The ancient costume of the Rong consists of two coarse striped widths of cloth which are held in place over the shoulders by means of a clasp, and about the loins with the aid of a cloth girdle. It reaches up to the knees. Both men and women wear trousers which come below the knees. Sometimes the men wear a short shirt, while the women wear a bodice. This was the ancient costume and the material for this was woven by the Lepchas themselves. Today the practice of weaving has almost died out. The Lepchas purchase ready-made materials. In place of the old style the women have taken over the Tibetan style in an ever increasing degree ; the long dress without sleeves (the Tibetan